

New Policy on Formosa . . . By Marquis Childs

Long-Range Meaning Stirs Trepidation

ANY INTERPRETATION of the new policy on Formosa must take into account the long-range meaning of this first step. For the immediate future, it fits the objective of keeping the Communists guessing and is therefore part of an expanded program of psychological warfare.



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The fact is that any raids the Chinese Nationalists might conduct today or in the next few months could have been carried out at any time in the past half year. They have been conducting small experimental raids, not from Formosa but from islands closer to the mainland. Information received here indicates the losses from such raids have been high in proportion to the number of men involved.

American intelligence sources report trained Chinese Communist military forces up to 400,000 are still stationed on the mainland opposite Formosa. The threat of larger raids by the Chinese Nationalists may compel the Peiping government to enlarge this force and thereby drain off some of the Communist reserves available for Korea. This also could help to relieve the ever-present threat of Chinese intervention in the war being waged by Communist guerrillas in Indo-China, where the French have suffered serious losses for more than five years.

BRITISH INTELLIGENCE reports, it should be added, do not agree with American estimates. The British believe the Chinese Communists have largely removed their troops from the area opposite Formosa since they have come to discount the danger of Chinese Nationalist raids.

The British attitude is complicated by many factors. One is Hongkong, the British crown colony, which represents a large investment. The fear in London is that one of the first reactions of the Peiping regime to the declaration on Formosa will be to threaten Hongkong.

Unquestionably, President Eisenhower's statement on Formosa has shaken the Western alliance. The fear is that American policy—and consequently American interest and American aid—will be increasingly deflected to the East. If Chiang Kai-shek is to have any real striking power, then American assistance to Formosa must be greatly expanded with a view to developing naval and air forces. This concern was evident in Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's remarks to the House of Commons.

BUT THE HARM done in Western Europe can be repaired so long as the new policy is kept in the context of a move on the chessboard of psychological warfare. What many fear—not only in London and in Paris but in Washington—is that this first step may lead inexorably toward American involvement in a large-scale war on the mainland of China.

The skeptics illustrate the danger as follows. The number of troops Chiang Kai-shek could transport to the mainland without outside help is today small—perhaps a company. Supposing he approaches the United States and says he is anxious to conduct a much larger raid. Will the United States Navy please furnish the ships to transport a battalion of troops? Air support will be necessary, too. If America complies with this request, will the Chinese Communists consider it an act of war?

Large questions of policy are involved here. Some are saying that before such a move the approval of Congress would have to be obtained by a declaration of war against Commu-

Congress was not obtained for the "police action" in Korea.

Naturally, Chiang Kai-shek will foster the next steps, as he is dedicated to restoring his own authority in a China purged of the Communists. That cannot be done with the limited forces on Formosa, regardless of how much American aid is forthcoming, in the view of those who take a skeptical view of the Chinese Nationalists. It can be done only with large-scale American intervention on the mainland:

WHEN PRESIDENT Eisenhower was in Korea, he was accompanied by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, the Navy's commander in chief in the Pacific area. To newspaper and radio men and others in the Eisenhower party, Radford talked up the Nationalists and the need to use them in a more active Asian strategy. The admiral, known as one of the most brilliant strategists in the Navy, accompanied General Eisenhower on the cruiser Helena as far as Wake Island. He conferred with the new President at the White House on the day the State of the Union message was delivered, and reports are current he will be given a new and important assignment.

It is the President's difficult role to appraise the pressures from one side and another. His obligation is to keep first and foremost what he has spoken of often as America's own enlightened self-interest.

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